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Human rights questions: Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Afghanistan, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Mali, Mexico, Monaco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Senegal, Slovenia, Spain, Swaziland, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia: draft resolution

United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education

The General Assembly,

Guided by the fundamental and universal principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1]

Reaffirming article 26 of the Declaration, which states that "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms", and recalling the provisions of other relevant international human rights instruments, which reflect the aims of this article,

Recalling the high importance attached by the World Conference on Human Rights June 1993 to human rights education,[2]

Recalling also the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights concerning the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004,

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).
[2] See A/CONF.157/24.

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Believing that human rights education constitutes an important vehicle for the elimination of gender-based discrimination and for ensuring equal opportunities through the promotion and protection of the human rights of women,

Convinced that every woman, man and child, in order to realize their full human potential, must be made aware of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Convinced also that human rights education should involve more than the provision of information and should constitute a comprehensive, lifelong process by which people at all levels of development and in all societies learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies,

Recognizing that human rights education is essential to the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms and that carefully designed training, dissemination and information programmes can have a catalytic effect on national, regional and international initiatives to promote and protect human rights and prevent human rights violations,

Convinced that human rights education contributes to a holistic concept of development consistent with the dignity of women and men of all ages, which takes into account particularly vulnerable segments of society, such as children, young persons, older persons, indigenous people, minorities, the rural and urban poor, migrant workers, refugees, persons with HIV/AIDS and disabled persons,

Recalling the discussions at the World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, where it was recognized that human rights education is a key to changing attitudes and behaviour based on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and to promoting tolerance and respect for diversity in societies, and affirming that such education is a determining factor in the promotion, dissemination and protection of the democratic values of justice and equity, which are essential to prevent and combat the spread of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance,

Looking forward to the outcome of the International Conference on School Education in relation to Freedom of Religion or Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, to be held in Madrid from 23 to 25 November 2001,

Welcoming the efforts to promote human rights education made by educators and non-governmental organizations in all parts of the world, as well as by intergovernmental organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme,

Recognizing the invaluable and creative role that non-governmental and community-based organizations play in the promotion and protection of human rights by disseminating public information and engaging in human rights education, especially at the grass-roots level and in remote and rural communities,

Aware of the potential role of the private sector in implementing at all levels of society the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004,[3] and the World Public Information Campaign, through

[3] A/51/506/Add.1, appendix.

financial support for governmental and non-governmental activities, as well as their own creative initiatives,

Convinced that the effectiveness of existing human rights education and public information activities would be enhanced by better coordination and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels,

Recalling that it is within the responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to coordinate relevant United Nations education and public information programmes in the field of human rights,

Noting with appreciation the efforts undertaken so far by the Office of the High Commissioner to increase information-sharing in the area of human rights education through the development of a database and resource collection on human rights education and to disseminate human rights information through its web site[4] and its publications and external relations programmes,

Welcoming the initiative of the Office of the High Commissioner to develop further the project entitled "Assisting communities together", launched in 1998, supported by voluntary funds and designed to provide small grants to grass-roots and local organizations carrying out practical human rights activities,

Welcoming also other United Nations public information activities in the field of human rights, including (a) the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights and the implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,[5] (b) the project of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization entitled "Towards a culture of peace", and (c) the Dakar Framework for Action, "Education For All", adopted at the World Education Forum, which, inter alia, reconfirmed the mandated role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in coordinating Education For All partners and maintaining their collective momentum within the process of securing quality basic education,[6]

Recognizing the value of information and communication technologies in human rights education to promote dialogue and understanding of human rights, and in that context welcoming, inter alia, the "CyberSchoolBus"[7] and the UNICEF "Voices of youth"[8] initiatives,

Recalling the mid-term global evaluation of progress made towards the achievement of the objectives of the Decade undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner, in cooperation with all other principal actors in the Decade, which was presented in the relevant report of the High Commissioner to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session,[9]

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the United Nations Decade for Human Rights

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[4] www.unhchr.ch.

[5] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[6] See *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, 2000).

[7] See http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/humanrights.

[8] See www.unicef.org.

[9] See A/55/360.

Education, 1995-2004,[10] and public information activities in the field of human rights;

2. *Urges* all Governments to promote the development of comprehensive, participatory and sustainable national strategies for human rights education and to establish and strengthen, as a priority in education policies, knowledge of human rights, both in its theoretical dimension and practical application;

3. *Welcomes* the steps taken by Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to implement the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004,[3] and to develop public information activities in the field of human rights, as indicated in the report of the High Commissioner;

4. *Urges* all Governments to contribute further to the implementation of the Plan of Action, in particular by:

(a) Encouraging the establishment, in accordance with national conditions, of broadly representative national committees for human rights education responsible for the development of comprehensive, effective and sustainable national plans of action for human rights education and information, taking into consideration the recommendations of the mid-term global evaluation of the Decade[9] and the guidelines for national plans of action for human rights education developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

(b) Encouraging, supporting and involving national and local non-governmental and community-based organizations in the implementation of their national plans of action;

(c) Initiating and developing cultural and educational programmes aimed at countering racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and supporting and implementing public information campaigns and specific training programmes in the field of human rights, as emphasized at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance;

5. *Encourages* Governments to consider, within their national plans of action for human rights education:

(a) The establishment of public access human rights resource and training centres capable of engaging in research, including the gender-sensitive training of trainers;

(b) The preparation, collection, translation and dissemination of human rights education and training materials;

(c) The organization of courses, conferences, workshops and public information campaigns and assistance in the implementation of internationally sponsored technical cooperation projects for human rights education and public information;

6. *Encourages* States, where such national public access human rights resource and training centres exist, to strengthen their capacity to support human

[10] A/56/271.

rights education and public information programmes at the international, regional, national and local levels;

7. *Calls upon* Governments, in accordance with national conditions, to accord priority to the dissemination, in the relevant national local and indigenous languages, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenants on Human Rights[11] and other human rights instruments, human rights materials and training manuals, including information on human rights mechanisms and complaint procedures and reports of States parties submitted under international human rights treaties, and to provide information and education in those languages on the practical ways in which national and international institutions and procedures may be utilized to ensure the effective implementation of those instruments;

8. *Encourages* Governments to support further, through voluntary contributions, the education and public information efforts undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner within the framework of the Plan of Action;

9. *Requests* the High Commissioner to continue to coordinate and harmonize human rights education and information strategies within the United Nations system, including the implementation of the Plan of Action, in cooperation, inter alia, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency in the collection of, use, processing, management and distribution of human rights information and educational materials, including through electronic means;

10. *Encourages* Governments to contribute to the further development of the web site of the Office of the High Commissioner, in particular with respect to the dissemination of human rights education materials and tools, and to continue and expand the publications and external relations programmes of the Office;

11. *Encourages* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to support national capacities for human rights education and information through its technical cooperation programme in the field of human rights, including the organization of training courses and peer education initiatives and the development of targeted training materials for professional audiences, as well as the dissemination of human rights information materials as a component of technical cooperation projects, to further develop its databases and resource collection on human rights education, and to continue to monitor developments in human rights education;

12. *Urges* the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat to continue to utilize United Nations information centres for the timely dissemination, within their designated areas of activity, of basic information, reference and audio-visual materials on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the reports of States parties submitted under international human rights instruments, and to that end to ensure that the information centres are supplied with adequate quantities of those materials;

13. *Stresses* the need for close collaboration between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Department of Public Information in the implementation of the Plan of Action and the World Public Information Campaign, and the need to harmonize their activities with those of other international organizations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization with regard to its

[11] Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

project entitled "Towards a culture of peace" and the International Committee of the Red Cross and relevant non-governmental organizations with regard to the dissemination of information on international humanitarian law;

14. *Invites* the specialized agencies and relevant United Nations programmes and funds to continue to contribute, within their respective spheres of competence, to the implementation of the Plan of Action and the World Public Information Campaign, and to cooperate and coordinate with each other and with the Office of the High Commissioner in that regard;

15. *Encourages* the relevant organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, all human rights bodies of the United Nations system, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to provide training in human rights for all United Nations personnel and officials;

16. *Encourages* the human rights treaty bodies, when examining reports of States parties, to place emphasis on the obligations of States parties in the area of human rights education and to reflect that emphasis in their concluding observations;

17. *Calls upon* international, regional and national non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations, in particular those concerned with children and youth, women, labour, development, food, housing, education, health care and the environment, as well as all other social justice groups, human rights advocates, educators, religious organizations, the private sector and the media, to undertake specific activities of formal, non-formal and informal education, including cultural events, alone and in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in implementing the Plan of Action;

18. *Welcomes*, in that context, initiatives to include civil society, non-governmental organizations, children and youth in national delegations to world conferences, summits and other meetings, as well as the work of non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental agencies in organizing parallel non-governmental organization and youth satellite meetings, as an important component of human rights education;

19. *Encourages* Governments, regional organizations and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to explore the potential support and contribution to human rights education of all relevant partners, including the private sector, development, trade and financial institutions and the media, and to seek their cooperation in the development of human rights education strategies;

20. *Encourages* regional organizations to develop strategies for the wider distribution of materials on human rights education through regional networks and to develop region-specific programmes to maximize the participation of national entities, whether governmental or non-governmental, in programmes on human rights education;

21. *Encourages* intergovernmental organizations to assist, upon request, collaboration between governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations at the national level;

22. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue implementation of and to expand the "Assisting communities together" project and

to consider other appropriate ways and means to support human rights education activities, including those undertaken by non-governmental organizations;

23. *Requests* the High Commissioner to bring the present resolution to the attention of all members of the international community and of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with human rights education and public information, and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session on the progress made towards the achievement of the objectives of the Decade under the item entitled "Human rights questions".